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BOOK REVIEWS

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF VENEREAL DISEASES. By David Lees.
Edinburgh, E. & S. Livingstone. 15s. Pp. 605.

THE author has extensive first-hand experience of these diseases. As a teacher that experience must have been continually and critically sifted; he is therefore eminently equipped to give to student and practitioner a knowledge of accurate diagnostic methods and sound principles of treatment of venereal diseases—a subject which cannot be made too real a branch of medical study.

In this volume the clinical, serological and microscopical manifestations, and the modern technique of "laboratory" diagnosis, of the venereal diseases, with their several treatments and the exacting standards of cure, on which the author insists, are all given lucid, interesting and persuasive exposition.

The author has found tryparsamide of demonstrable benefit in parenchymatous central nerve syphilis, thus supporting much recent American work. He forecasts that a combination of "malaria therapy" and tryparsamide will probably prove the most effective treatment now available. He has not found that lesion of the optic nerve necessarily forbids the use of tryparsamide.

He records a valuable clinical discovery of his own—that 1 c.c. of pituitrin injected intramuscularly immediately after withdrawal by puncture of cerebrospinal fluid has, in his hands, reduced to a minimum the onset of headache following the operation. It probably helps to restore quickly the intrathecal pressure.

The author is to be congratulated on this book. It is strikingly and well illustrated. It is natural that the more arresting lesions should be selected for illustration, though we doubt if in Scotland they are any commoner than elsewhere, where nowadays they are, in fact, rare. The book is fully indexed, and both student and practitioner will find themselves well served by it as a book to read and keep for reference.

H. M. H.

THE CLINICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE WASSERMANN REACTION. By Robert A. Kilduffe. Lea and Faebiger, Philadelphia and New York. 1926. Illustrated. Pp. 203. \$2.50.

THE purpose of this book is to furnish in accessible form such succinct information as is necessary for the proper application of the test and the interpretation of its results; to consider the status of the reaction as applied to the recognition and management of this disease; and to present briefly the salient data upon which this estimation is based.

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No attempt has been made to enter deeply into the technical complexities or abstract minutiae surrounding the mechanism or application of the complement-fixation test in syphilis.

The book has been written not for the serologist or the syphilologist only, but mainly for the larger group of clinicians who, in their hastily snatched moments of reading, are apt to be confused by diametrically opposed statements as to the value and significance of the Wassermann reaction.

In our opinion the author has succeeded in his endeavours. The book is uniformly well written; the facts are clearly and succinctly assembled and, all through, there is a poise and a wise judgment in stating opinions and deductions that is truly admirable.

The author recognises that the significance of the Wassermann reaction as applied to the study of syphilis is quite definitely affected by the care and technique with which the method is applied. Every laboratory finding must be interpreted, and the complement-fixation test is no exception. He pleads for a closer co-operation and understanding between the clinician and the laboratory worker, and fortunately this book comes at a very opportune moment. A sufficient amount of work has never been done by many workers to establish the value of the Wassermann reaction: the inherent and unrecognised technical errors of the early days of the complement-fixation test have disappeared. Thanks to the wisely-controlled scheme for treating patients at venereal clinics in Great Britain, frequent opportunities are afforded for close co-operation between clinician and laboratory workers, and the tendency of the one to consider himself as inevitably in the right as the other was indubitably in the wrong has diminished to such an extent as to make it desirable to emphasise the danger of a possible tendency to throw the entire burden of proof on the laboratory.

To sum up, we consider this book an excellent one and eagerly commend it to all clinicians and laboratory workers.

A. D.